CONSUMERS' Guide

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 13 SEPTEMBER 20, 1937

YOUR MONEY'S WORTH IN SHOES

CONSUMERS' Guide

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VOL. IV, No. 13 SEPT. 20, 1937

IF there are any smarter consumers than a group we know about out in Washakie County, Wyo., we'd like to know about them. To the naked eye there is nothing extraordinary about these consumers. They are people, like many others with small incomes, who some months back were getting pretty frazzled over the daily problem of making limited food budgets cover the job of feeding husky, growing boys and girls adequate, nutritious, and satisfying meals. What is unique about them is the way they went about getting help on this problem.

A few of these baffled homemakers went for help to their county Home Demonstration Agent, one of some 1,200 such agents in the country whose job it is to counsel the families in their districts on the many jobs connected with managing the business of homemaking efficiently and economically. This particular Home Demonstration Agent was wise in the ways of planning and preparing wholesome diets. "Tell us", these consumers asked, "how we can lick this diet-budget ogre."

Together they worked out a plan. They decided to put on a 30-day food-buying experiment. The Home Demonstration Agent would give the group the general pattern of an adequate diet, suggest the types of foods and the amounts that would give each family the nourishment it needed, and advise with the group on how to apply these rules to their individual problems. Each experimenter would keep a careful record of foods purchased, expenditures, and the meals actually served. Furthermore, they would all gather once a week to compare notes and exchange ideas. For fun, and because they knew others would benefit by being in on this experiment, they decided to make it a community project with membership open to any interested homemaker.

News of the proposed experiment spread like wildfire. Telephones buzzed. Stories appeared in the local newspapers. It was a relatively small community, but when the experiment got down to business there were 45 homemakers eager to embark on this novel undertaking.

All of the 45 enthusiastic consumers at the first meeting agreed to plan menus and keep careful food accounts over the 30-day period in order to determine accurately in actual dollars and cents any savings they achieved in their food expenditures. Then they examined the diet plans which the United States Department of Agriculture has worked out for families of all sizes and ages and types (any consumer can buy for 5 cents "Diets to Fit the Family Income" from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.). Conveniently, these diets are worked out to provide the best possible nutrition at four levels of cost. The bottom-cost diet is an emergency one, not good enough as a regular day-in-and-day-out bill of fare but adequate for short periods. Diets at the three levels above this are good year-round food programs costing minimum, moderate, and liberal amounts. To start, these 45 experimenters decided to plan their meals to the minimum cost level. By following this pattern, worked out by scientists, they could protect the health of their families with an adequate amount of vitamins and minerals in the amounts needed by an active father, growing boys and girls, and a busy mother, or whoever had to be fed. How to make the meals beguile and please the appetites of their families was up to each homemaker, but part of the fun of the experiment was swapping ideas on this important part of meal planning.

Five meetings were held to keep the enterprise a group undertaking and to get pointers that would make for the success of each cooperating consumer. At the first they discussed the "Mechanics of Menu Planning"; at the others "Thrift Ideas", "Child Feeding", "Hurry-up Meals", and "Consumer Buying." Actual menus planned by the members were studied in order to give each planner practice in judging her success in achieving an adequate diet at the desired cost.

After a week's trial of the minimum-cost diet by all the group, some of the experimenters decided that this diet level was too severe, and since they could afford a little more leeway in expenditures, they changed to the moderate-cost diet plan. All of the group were thrifty, ambitious homemakers, but none was financially forced to stay on the lower-cost diet. Some families were quite satisfied with this diet because, while meals were simpler than formerly, yet careful planning had made the food much more satisfying.

Thrift ideas were contributed by each member of the group. Five-minute demonstrations were given by two homemakers on pet thrift plans. Discussion led to the conclusion by the group that five ways to trim edges on food expenditures are: Plan menus at least a week in advance; market carefully a week ahead of time; take advantage of "specials"; buy with the idea of "getting the most for your money"; keep an emergency shelf to supplement meals in emergencies.

The group learned more about the importance of food habits for children of pre-school age. Selection

[Continued on page 18]

YOUR MONEY'S WORTH IN SHOES

Shoe values come to those who know materials and workmanship that make for wear

WHEN fashion decrees that skins of sharks, alligators, snakes, or kangaroos will be the smart new footwear for the coming season, fishermen sharpen their harpoons, hunters polish their guns, make their traps, and travel ocean, jungle, and desert to bring in the coveted skins. But most of the shoes worn by men, women, and children in the United States are made from the hides and skins of domestic animals. In 1935 the value of the products of the boot and shoe industry other than those made of rubber was $643,872,000. To make these millions of dollars worth of shoes as well as other leather commodities, American tanners import hides and skins from many countries besides buying those available through American packers and farmers.

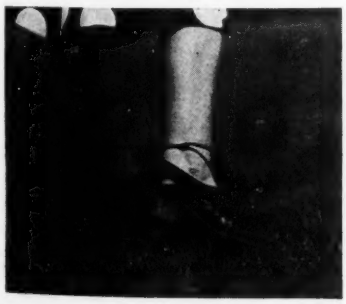
Cattle, calves, goats, and sheep are raised primarily for food. Their hides and skins are largely a byproduct of the meat industry. Though the packer takes into consideration the value of the hide and skin in the price he pays to the farmer for his livestock, there is no direct and consistent relationship between the amount of money the farmer gets for his animals and the amount the packer gets for the hides and skins which he sells to the tanner. Likewise there is no close correlation between the price of leather and the price of shoes. The cost of manufacturing and general economic conditions dictate the price consumers pay for shoes.

Money that goes for shoes cuts a disturbingly large hole in many family budgets. Even if the style of the shoe appeals and "it fits like a glove", there are many questions which consumers with a slim purse would like to have answered. Will the particular shoes he has selected give him good wear? Will they hold their shape? Will the leather be free from cracks and tears?

Experts cannot judge the wearing quality of shoes by a glance. They often find it necessary to break a shoe down, to cut a sample of leather from each of its parts, and to study the shoe's construction. The National Bureau of Standards, in response to an appeal from the General Federation of Women's Clubs to assist in establishing standards for women's leather shoes, is at present carrying on an experiment to test the durability of shoes of different construction. Results of their study are not yet published.

Few shoes have informative labels to tell the consumer what kind of service he may expect from them. Yet shoes designed for the same type of service vary greatly in price. The cost of a pair of shoes depends largely on the quality of leather and the technique used in making them. High-priced shoes usually have more hand work and stay longer on the last acquiring their shape. Cheap shoes are made with every possible economy in time, labor, and materials. The wearing value of medium-priced shoes is the most difficult to judge, as there is more vari-

Take care of the soles and heels, for they do the brunt of the work of shoes.



Soles cut from the "bend" of the hide wear twice as long as those from the belly.

Run-down heels quickly twist a shoe out of shape, are costly in shoe wear.

ation in the quality of materials used and in the workmanship. Test by experience is, to date, the only guide consumers have, but knowledge of the types of leathers and of the construction methods used in making shoes can help one in cutting the risks of unwise selection.

If you are interested in the life of your shoes, take care of their soles and heels. They do the brunt of the shoes' work and are the quickest to wear out. Leather soles are made from heavy cattle hides which have been either vegetable- or chrome-tanned. The portion of the hide from which the soles have been cut and the method of tanning influence the wearing quality of the leather. Soles cut from the "bend" of the hide—the section which originally covered the animal from shoulder to tail and from the backbone to the upper edge of the belly—are the staunchest and wear about twice as long as those cut from the belly, and one and one-half times as long as those from the shoulder. Leather from the bend is close-fibered and firm, while that from the belly is flabby and soft.

Process of tanning used on the hide also affects the life of a sole. Vegetable-tanned leather is used for most soles. Natural color of vegetable-tanned leather ranges from shades of tan to reddish brown. Most leather used in the upper part of the shoes and some used for soles is chrome-tanned. (For description of tanning process, see CONSUMERS' GUIDE, Sept. 6, 1937.) Longest wearing soles are those made from unwaxed chrome leather which is light bluish in color. But though unwaxed chrome leather rates high for durability, it absorbs moisture so readily that it is practical for only very dry climates or indoor use as in gymnasiums. However, chrome leather, when filled with greases to make it more waterproof, still wears longer than vegetable-tanned leather. Brand-new waxed chrome soles are often stiff at first, but after they are worn a few times the stiffness disappears.

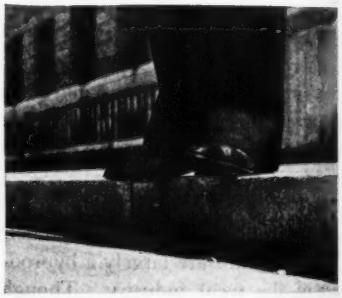
Rubber and composite materials are being used more and more for heels of shoes. Wood is a common material used for high-heeled dancing slippers and other lightweight footwear as it is not as heavy as leather. But as it is not as resilient as leather or as springy as rubber, a leather or rubber lift is often put on a wooden heel. If you wish to preserve the life of your shoes, take care of their heels. Run-down heels quickly twist a shoe out of shape.

Consumers usually have more of "an eye" for uppers than for soles of shoes, yet the naked eye can seldom spot wearing quality here either. Trade names often give little indication of the type of leather used in the shoe. Grain, nature, color of the finish of the leather are often described in the trade name, while the original source of the leather, the name of the animal from which it came, is lacking or the name of another animal borrowed. "Elk" is a trade name used for side leather made from cattle hides which have been tanned and finished in a certain way, while true elk skin is sold under the trade name of buckskin. Patent leather shoes may mean shoes made from side leather, horse, colt, goat, kid, or calf.

Side leather—so-called from the practice of splitting hides into halves or sides before tanning—is widely used in shoes of every type from the hiking boot to the dancing pump. Its relatively low cost and durability as well as the ease with which it takes many finishes makes it a standby material. Side leather is usually split into two or more layers for shoe uppers. The first layer, called the grain split, is the hair side of the hide. It gives better wear than flesh splits, made from the under side of a hide. Fine lines and hair holes on

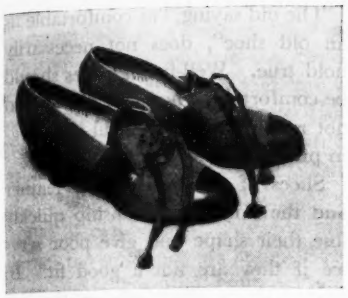
Grain leather gives better wear than "flesh splits" from the same hide.

Side leather from cattle hides makes durable shoes for rough or hard wear.



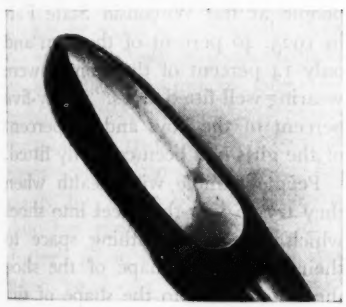
Calfskin shoes give good general service for city street wear.

Sheepskin ("kid") in bargain shoes is stretchy, loses shape quickly, scuffs easily.



Best suede has a fine silk nap, a rich, uniform color, and no greasiness.

In patent leather of good quality, the grain should show through the varnishes.



Insoles of close-textured flexible leather wear better than fabricated materials.

Cost of resoling depends largely on how soles were attached to uppers. Welted shoes are easily repaired.

grain leather make a design similar to that on the back of the human hand. This design is lacking on flesh splits, unless it is artificially stamped on.

Often a grain pattern peculiar to the hide of one animal is embossed on that of another or on a flesh split, making it difficult to tell whether it is a true grain or not. Cattle hides, as well as other heavy hides, are sometimes split to the thickness of lighter-weight calfskin, embossed with the natural grain of calfskin and sold as calfskin. Genuine calfskin is seldom split.

Calfskin is considered a strong leather. Its flexibility makes it a desirable choice for general service. Calf leather, like side leather, is finished in a variety of ways. It may be treated with a smooth, boarded, embossed, or glazed finish. Dull calf leather is leather that has been heavily waxed on the flesh side. Buffed leather, which has less nap than suede, is finished on the grain side, part of the grain surface being taken off with an emery wheel.

Most of our suede footwear is made of calf finished on the flesh side, but suede shoes may be shoes made of many different leathers. Thus sheepskin takes a suede finish and at first glance may seem to look like calf suede. The best suede has a fine, silky nap, with no indication of greasiness. It has a rich, uniform color which does not rub off easily. One can rub a handkerchief lightly over the surface of good suede and only a faint color will show on the white cloth.

Coatings of special varnishes or enamels turn calf, side leather, and other leathers into shiny patent leather shoes. Patent finish is usually applied on the grain side. In patent leather of good quality the grain will show through the varnishes. The attractive appearance of patent leather often makes it first choice for dress shoes. Feet shod in patent leather often get hot because of its airtight and watertight varnishes.

Leathers made from hides of different animals have distinct characteristics and vary in the durability and the type of service the consumer may expect from them. Cordovan leather, one of the most expensive materials used in men's shoes, is made from the rump of a horsehide. It is a scuff-resistant, long-wearing leather, but its close texture does not make it desirable for every foot. Many people need a more porous leather to allow their feet to breathe. Shoes made of kangaroo leather are usually costly shoes. It is the strongest leather known for its given weight and thickness and gives excellent service, as it does not readily scuff, chip, or crack. Shark leather is a recent addition to the materials used in shoe uppers. Though no leather can be called "scuff-proof", shark leather will stand much punishment before showing wear. A relatively expensive leather, it is seldom used for an entire upper, but for toe caps, especially for children's shoes, it is an excellent choice. All leathers will scuff to some extent, some more easily than others. The finish given to a leather also influences its resistance to scuff. When toes and heels do peel or scar, attention should be paid to them. The loose strand of leather should be clipped off and the scar polished.

Genuine kid leather is not used for shoes. Kid shoes, often the first choice for street wear and for dancing, are really made from skins of goats. These skins finish well in many different colors, are soft, pliable, and porous—characteristics prized in a summer shoe. For winter street wear, kid usually gives way to other leathers which are warmer and more waterproof. Best grades of kid leather are expensive. Bargain sales in kid shoes usually mean shoes made of sheepskin. Sheep-

skin is soft like kid, but it is very stretchy, is inclined to lose its shape quickly, to scuff easily, and to peel at the toes. Sheepskin comes into its own when used as the lining for shoes.

Leather, paper, and cloth are used to line shoes. Leather, especially for the back half or quarter of the shoe lining, is more satisfactory, as it tends to keep the shape of the shoe and makes a smooth, comfortable inner surface. Insoles of close-textured flexible leather are more comfortable and help to keep the shape of the shoe better than those made out of fabricated material. If you are curious about your insoles you will have to lift a corner of the lining of the shoe in order to examine them.

Counters, or back-stays of shoes, are easier to inspect. Stitched to the inside of the shoe at the back seam, they both reinforce the seam and help to retain the shape of the shoe. These stiffeners are made of many grades of leather and fiber. Though solid leather which has been beaten to conform to the last of the shoe is first choice for a counter, a fine-quality material such as those made from hemp or flax or fiberboard is preferable to one made out of cheap leather which has been stiffened with glue. On cheap shoes especially it is important that the counters have "stand-up" qualities.

Construction of a shoe depends to some extent on the service for which it is designed and the price for which it is to be sold. Consumers who are hard on shoes and are constantly taking them to the repair shop will do well to study the construction of shoes when they buy them. Cost and ease with which new soles can be exchanged for old depend largely on how the soles were first attached to the uppers.

"Welted" and "McKay" are two of the most common types of construction. Over two-thirds of the men's shoes and many of the women's sport shoes are welted. It is easy to spot a welted shoe, as the welt, resting on the projecting part of the outsole, usually extends a quarter of an inch or so beyond the line where it joins the upper. In building the shoe, one edge of the welt, which is merely a narrow strip of leather, is first sewed to the upper and insole of the shoe and the other edge is then sewed to the outsole. The inside of the shoe is free from tacks and stitches. Welted shoes are easily repaired—especially if the narrow strip of leather making the welt is of good quality.

McKay-constructed shoes can be repaired but not so easily as welted shoes. The McKay technique is used for lighter-weight and for inexpensive shoes. Outsole, upper, and insole are stitched together, with the stitch going through to the inside of the shoe. The stitches are then covered with a sock lining.

Stitchdown technique is commonly used for children's shoes. Like the welted shoe, it has no stitches on the inside of the shoe. The edge of the upper part of the shoe is turned out and is stitched directly down to the outsole of the shoe.

Turned soles are found on dainty, costly footwear. Very flexible soles are used and are sewn either by hand or machine to the uppers, and then the shoe is turned right side out. It is difficult to repair turned shoes. New soles usually must be nailed or cemented on the shoes. Technique of cementing the upper and outsole together was formerly used only on cheap shoes, but the method is now being used on higher-grade shoes, especially for women's sandals and cut-out shoes. Modern cemented shoes, if correctly made, have a trimness and lightness of appearance. Nailing and pegging the uppers and soles together are methods used in many cheap grades of shoes and in men's work shoes.

The old saying, "as comfortable as an old shoe", does not necessarily hold true. Well-fitting shoes should be comfortable when new and should not require a long painful breaking-in process.

Shoes of the best quality leather and the finest workmanship quickly lose their shape and give poor service if they are not a good fit. In buying shoes, don't rely on the size marked on an old pair of shoes. Sizes of different makes of shoes are not uniform. Manufacturers are continually changing their lasts—the form over which the shoe is constructed. Insist that the shoe clerk measure your foot when you are both in a relaxed and standing position.

It is more important for shoes to suit your foot rather than your vanity. Women especially are inclined to place style before comfort in buying shoes. In a survey taken of the footwear being worn by a thousand people at the Wisconsin State Fair in 1925, 40 percent of the men and only 14 percent of the women were wearing well-fitted shoes. Forty-five percent of the boys and 32 percent of the girls had been correctly fitted.

People gamble with health when they try to jam their feet into shoes which give no breathing space to their toes. The shape of the shoe should conform to the shape of the foot. To enable the 26 delicate bones of the foot to lie almost straight, the inner line of the shoe needs to follow the fairly straight line of the foot. The position of the ball of the foot, which distributes the weight and support to the body, should rest at the widest part of the sole, and the shoe should fit snugly under the arch.

Today the fluoroscopic machine has an honored place in many shoe stores. By means of the X-ray the foot can be clearly seen inside the shoe. Testing the fit of children's shoes by fluoroscope is especially de-

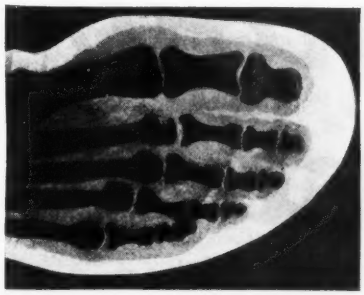
sirable. A young foot can so easily be compressed in a shoe that is too short or narrow without the child realizing it. Children's feet grow so rapidly that it is better to risk fitting them in shoes that are a little large rather than too short. But adults, whose feet are fully grown, should be careful to get shoes that are neither too small nor too large. Callouses and a "burning sensation" are often the result of wearing shoes that are too big.

Relation between well-fitted shoes and one's general well-being can hardly be overemphasized. Bad posture usually followed by physical disturbances is often traced to ill-fitting or incorrectly made shoes. There is no economy in wearing out a pair of uncomfortable shoes. Foot troubles which may take years to correct are often the result. Consumers suffering from foot ailments should consult a doctor before experimenting with corrective shoes. Though it is claimed that some foot ills can be cured by orthopedic shoes, the main purpose of footwear is to protect the feet, not to cure foot troubles. Wise consumers seriously question the truth of an advertisement which claims otherwise. Recently the Federal Trade Commission has prohibited the use of a doctor's name in advertising a shoe when no doctor is connected with the business. In many States there are laws making it illegal for anyone except licensed medical men and foot specialists to prescribe specific shoes as a cure for foot ailments.

Twenty years ago the consumer determined to wear correctly made shoes was compelled to sacrifice style for the sake of health. Today this is no longer a real problem. Manufacturers and educational institutions have tackled this problem. Since 1924 Antioch College, for one, has carried on an extensive piece of research, studying the relationship of health and body mechanics to various types of footwear. Many manufacturers are making shoes that are generally satisfactory from both physiological and aesthetic points of view.

Shoes should be comfortable when new, and not require a painful breaking-in process.

Before you buy, have your foot measured in both a relaxed and standing position.



Let shoe shape follow foot shape, and always allow breathing space for toes.

X-ray machines help you see whether the shoe provides ample space for your foot.

One way of getting good value from money spent for footwear is to exercise judgment on when and where you wear your shoes. High-heeled, thin-soled, delicate leather pumps are not constructed for long tramps on country roads or city pavements.

Footwear requires some consideration, if it is to give long service. Perspiration is hard on leather. If possible, it is best to have at least two pairs of shoes for general wear so that you can give one pair a rest.

Polishing or oiling leather tends to keep it soft and pliable and to make it more resistant to water. Wet leather stretches quickly out of shape. Keep damp shoes away from hot radiators, steam pipes, or stoves. Always allow wet leather to dry slowly.

Oil and grease make ugly stains on leather and should be removed as quickly as possible. Gasoline and other ordinary grease solvents often spread the spot rather than remove it. Best method is to coat the stain with a thick solution of rubber in a solvent which evaporates quickly. The rubber makes a coating on the shoe which should be peeled off when almost dry. If necessary the operation should be repeated a couple of times. Some of the ready-prepared cements, if they are thick and dry very fast and contain nothing but rubber and pure solvent, are very satisfactory.

For further information on leather shoes write to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1523, "Leather Shoes: Selection and Care." Price, 5 cents.

Know Your Fabric

Not only consumers but producers, too, stand to gain from more informative and accurate labeling of fabrics. Here are some notes on recent developments in the movement for better labeling

SILK, linen, cotton, and wool—these four fibers over many centuries made up our fabrics. It was hard enough for consumers to tell these materials apart, much less know how to care for them properly, but comparatively recently a new fiber appeared on the scene to complicate consumer problems still further. This is a synthetic product, rayon, its name covering several types of material differing from each other in composition. These rayon materials call for differing types of treatment, too, as many consumers have found to their sorrow. Yet they resemble each other so closely that they cannot be told apart by many consumers. In fact, it would take a laboratory test to distinguish some rayons from natural fiber materials. The consequent confusion, resulting in complaints from consumers and losses to retail shops, has centered attention on the necessity for clear textile-fiber identification.

No consumer problem has received more attention in the last few months than has textile-fiber identification. Consumer groups, commercial agencies, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Congress of the United States have been giving this problem careful consideration. The purpose of this article is to focus our news spotlight on some happenings on the fiber identification front.

In June the American Home Economics Association, long a champion of truthful fiber identification and informative labeling, resolved at its Kansas City convention: "Whereas various agencies are engaged in efforts to secure identification of fibers in fabrics, be it therefore resolved, that the American Home Economics Association endorse this movement and that its members lend their assistance in every way possible, and be it further resolved, that this resolution be sent to the Federal Trade Commission."

However, the genesis of the immediate campaign activity in this field goes back to January 1936. Adopting the slogan, "The Women Want to Know", the New York Federation of Women's Clubs, with over 40,000 women members in 240 metropolitan clubs, decided that the time had come for direct action. They asked their members to request sales clerks to write the fiber content on sales checks for every fabric material purchased. These checks were then to be forwarded to the Federal Trade Commission as evidence of the consumers' interest in this problem.

General trend of the Federal Trade Commission's reply was that where there is actual misrepresentation the Commission can issue a cease and desist order. The Commission, however, does not have power to compel the seller to label his merchandise or to put facts on his labels.

Procedure in a Federal Trade Commission case involving misrepresentation, mislabeling, or misbranding may follow one of two lines. Any individual, or a competitor, may lodge a complaint with the Commission, or the Commission may initiate a proceeding on its own responsibility. After a preliminary investigation by attorneys the facts are laid before the Commission, which may decide to issue a complaint or

permit offenders, in mild cases, to sign a stipulation to cease and desist from the unlawful practices of which complaint has been made. If they refuse to sign the stipulation, the Commission then resorts to its complaint procedure.

A "complaint" issued by the Federal Trade Commission is the statement of charges against the respondent. The accused may file an answer to these charges and present evidence before a trial examiner, who in turn reports his "findings of fact" to the Commission. The case may be argued before the full Commission, with attorneys for the respondent and for the Commission presenting briefs and oral arguments to support their contentions. The Commission then issues an order to cease and desist or dismisses the case.

No penalty applies to offenders, whether they stipulate that they will cease and desist or are ordered to do so by the Commission after formal proceedings. Only in the event the Commission's order has been taken to court and there upheld is the offender subject to penalties. As in baseball, three strikes make an out. First misrepresentation, when detected, brings action from the Commission—strike one. Second offense, violating the Commission's order, may result in a court order similar to that of the Commission—strike two. Third offense, violating the order of the court, brings a penalty for contempt—strike three and out. However, there is this exception. When the Commission's first action is by stipulation, no strike is called for that offense as the Commission must revert to its complaint procedure before an order can be issued and the matter taken to court.

Since March of this year the Federal Trade Commission has settled 19 fabric identification cases by stipulation. Of these, 7 involved only misbranding, while 12 involved both misbranding and false and misleading advertising. These 19 cases fall into two general categories.

One type of case is concerned with the use of fabric names such as crepe, taffeta, and satin which consumers had been accustomed to identifying with silk fabrics in the prerayon days. The question is this: Shall the rayon industry be forced to coin new fabric terms or may it use such qualified phrases as "rayon crepe", and others of like nature?

There is a second type of case where special fabric names are not involved. Here claims are made that fabrics are silk, whereas tests show that they are not. All of the cases in this category which have come before the Commission since March involved both misbranding and false and misleading advertising. Some cases involved textile fiber used in hosiery as well as dress materials.

The Federal Trade Commission now has on its docket seven complaints involving fabric identification. Five of these are against large New York department stores, one against a hosiery manufacturer, and another against a distributor of piece goods. Stipulations are generally not more than a page in length, but the complaints, which are the statements of the charges against the respondent, often run to three or four pages in length.

Let us take a look at one of these complaints to see how they are made up. Paragraph 1 gives information as to the name and address of the firm, the type of business it conducts, and states that it is engaged in interstate commerce. Paragraph 2 certifies that the firm is in substantial competition with other corporations. Paragraph 3 specifies the facts of the case which represent misbranding or false and misleading advertising. For example, one of the complaints at hand reproduced the following advertisement for a dress: "Smart New Yorkers Have Gone Wild About It. (Name of magazine) and (name of magazine) both stress this new sculptural quality. The Grecian moulded lines that show every curve of the figure beneath. And it is unquestionably one of the most important fashion trends in seasons. Noteworthy, too, because it's in supple black silk jersey—favored fabric of the great (name of designer). You can't do better than to adopt this dress at once. In sizes 10 to 18." Paragraph 4 states that the representation made about the type of fiber used in the fabric in the above advertisement is not true, that the fabric in this case was not composed of silk. Paragraph 5 states: "The said representations and practices as described hereinbefore have the capacity and tendency to, and do, mislead and deceive the purchasing public into the erroneous belief that the dresses manufactured by respondent and described by it as herein set forth are manufactured of silk. . . ." Paragraph 6 then states that the above acts "were and are, each and all, to the prejudice of the public and of respondent's competitors, and constitute unfair methods of competition in interstate commerce. . . ." The final paragraph of the complaint sets forth the time when a hearing shall be held before the Federal Trade Commission. It also states that if the respondent corporation desires to protest the proceeding, the respondent shall within 20 days file an answer to the complaint. Most of the seven fiber identification complaints now before the Federal Trade Commission are to have a hearing within the next few months.

Persistent interest in fiber identification on the part of consumers has stimulated activity on the part of commercial firms. At the mid-year convention (June 1937) of the National Retail Dry Goods Association the publicity director of a large New York City department store made an unusually frank statement

Charts prepared by the Bureau of Home Economics help puzzled consumers to know what quality points to look for when buying garments.*

with special reference to fiber identification: "Last week and yesterday stores sold tens of thousands of dollars of merchandise that today is being returned to them. These are returns that canceled sales we thought we made yesterday, and sales we thought we had last week, returns of goods that cost us money to advertise, to sell, to deliver, and to call for again; returns that increase mark downs; returns from disgruntled customers; returns that have undermined the confidence of some of our customers; costly returns, caused for the most part by the fact that the customers discovered something about the merchandise when they got it home that they did not know when they bought it.

"Now, did we do everything within our power to inform these customers properly about the merits—and the limitations—of the goods at the time we sold them? You know the answer—it's NO!

"Did we, as merchants—and when I say we, I mean our sales people, our buyers, our merchandise men, the head of the house, and in many cases even the manufacturer—did we know the merits and the limitations of the goods so that we could have informed these customers at the time we sold the goods? You know the answer to that one, too—it's definitely NO!"

What this store is doing to put an end to this situation was described in the CONSUMERS' GUIDE, Volume IV, Number 9, page 2. Briefly stated the plans call for getting the facts from the manufacturer and seeing that this information carries through to the ultimate consumer on the label and in advertising copy.

The following notice came last month from another large New York department store: "Notice: Important and effective immediately ——— & Co. will identify the fiber content of all merchandise. It

**Set of nine Clothing Selection Charts on sale for 40 cents by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. Actual size, 20 x 30 inches each.*

is therefore necessary for all manufacturers to cooperate by indicating precisely the correct fiber or fiber combination and weave for each style of merchandise on invoice." A New York newspaper in reporting the above action says that other stores are taking similar action.

The president of a large commercial firm, which licenses its special treatment of fabrics to 3,900 processors who in turn apply it to 1 billion yards of fabric, has just announced: "Each piece of goods handled by our company in the future will carry a fabric identification tag that will tell clearly and concisely all who wish to know what percentage of wool, silk, or rayon is involved in a contemplated purchase. The tag will carry through to the cutter-up, the retailer, and the consumer." The label statements are to be policed by central testing laboratories located in New York and operated under the supervision of a large commercial testing laboratory.

Last April a merchandise counselor writing in a monthly magazine of national circulation said: "The buyers of this country are hungry for products, stores, services, men they can trust. They want not just cheap things, but good cheap things; not just glamour, but honest worth beneath it. They want advertising to be a man's written word of honor." A month later this magazine reported: "Consumers near and far were prompt to applaud her (the author's) downright appeal for fair and recognizable identification of fiber, particularly rayon. Requests for permission to reprint the article came pouring in; to date upwards of 100,000 copies of the article, or extracts from it, have been distributed among trade executives and interested laymen. . . ."

"Truth in fabrics" legislation has been introduced in Congress for a good many years, and the present interest in fabric identification has produced more than the usual number of bills on the subject this past session. Three bills were introduced in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate.

Response of the trade to the movement for fiber identification and for informative labeling has been varied. Speaking broadly of the whole question of informative labeling one trade publication reported in August that on interviewing a group of Kansas City retailers they "found out from them that there'd been practically no local consumer demand for labeling, that what's more, retailers didn't intend to be drawn into a course of labeling and promotion for which their trade did not obviously call, and which might indeed tend to confuse (the customer) unnecessarily. . . ." On the other hand a retail manager in summing up his views says, "Fiber identification may not be in itself nearly as important as some of the other facts about merchandise, but fiber identification is and must be the basis on which these and other contributions depend. . . ."

Eight months ago another store executive wrote in a trade paper: "We are not the offenders. We are reliable merchants. Our customers can judge the durability and quality of goods by its price." An advertising manager is quoted as saying that "women are able to learn all they really want to know about fabrics at the present time. . . . Tags labeled silk or wool would really offer very little enlightenment to the average shopper."

Perhaps "truth in fabrics" is only the first step in aiding buyers of clothes and household necessities. Performance specifications may be the thing that consumers really want. In contrast to the above quotations is the statement of the case in favor of informative labeling made in the same trade publication 4 months ago which devoted a 48-page special section to the subject, "The Consumer Wants to Know." "Speak the language of facts", said a half dozen leaders of women's organizations in the opening article.

In answer we find the Chairman of the Merchandising Division of the National Retail Dry Goods Association saying: "We can, in staple and some semi-staple goods, develop standards of manufacture, examination, and grading—standards which should be equally acceptable to manufacturers, retailers, and consumers alike—standards which may be clearly indicated to our customers through advertising and through labels supplied by the manufacturer—standards which will enable the purchaser of staple goods to better judge quality and durability." Another article reports on replies to a questionnaire sent to 100 store executives scattered throughout the country which indicated that 97 percent favored the present move to request manufacturers to put a correct description of the fabric on all the materials bought. "Fact tags will mend the weak link in the selling chain—both consumer and salesperson need more information at the point of sale", is the caption of another article by the advertising manager of a Midwestern department store. Summing up, this magazine states: "This movement is no passing fad because it has been slow in maturity, and having learned to walk, is now ready to run."

In studying this problem consumers need to keep in mind that groups other than themselves have a financial stake in its solution. Producers of the raw materials stand to gain a steadier market for their products when demand for them is based on intelligent selection. Others between original producer and final consumer have a stake in telling the truth about fiber or concealing it, depending on the theory of business success upon which they operate.

OUT OF THE LOCKER

Here is a record of how cold-storage locker plants help some consumers to get better food at lower cost

STRAWBERRIES in November and fresh asparagus at Christmas sound like luxuries to most of us, but a small army of consumers now serves such out-of-season foods as a matter of course. Thanks to the cold-storage locker plants that have been springing up over the country, these consumers can go to their refrigerated lockers in the winter months. There they take out the chickens or berries that they bought at lower prices during hot weather and cannily stowed away against times when prices would be high. They remove their produce in much the same way that they would take the family silver out of the safety deposit vault—and with considerably less trouble.

Briefly, the new locker system amounts to this: Private concerns or cooperative enterprises rent out refrigerated locker space to individuals for the storing of meat, eggs, fruit, etc. Such produce the clients can remove at any time they wish. Though a city trade is steadily growing, most clients are still farmers who have home-killed meat to take care of. For their convenience many of the plants have turned to slaughtering, sausage-making, curing, and pickling as sidelines. In fact, they have turned themselves into "pocket-size packing plants" with the butcher hired by the concern as a person of importance. Often this custom butcher slaughters the livestock on the farm, then brings it to the processing room where he cares for it.

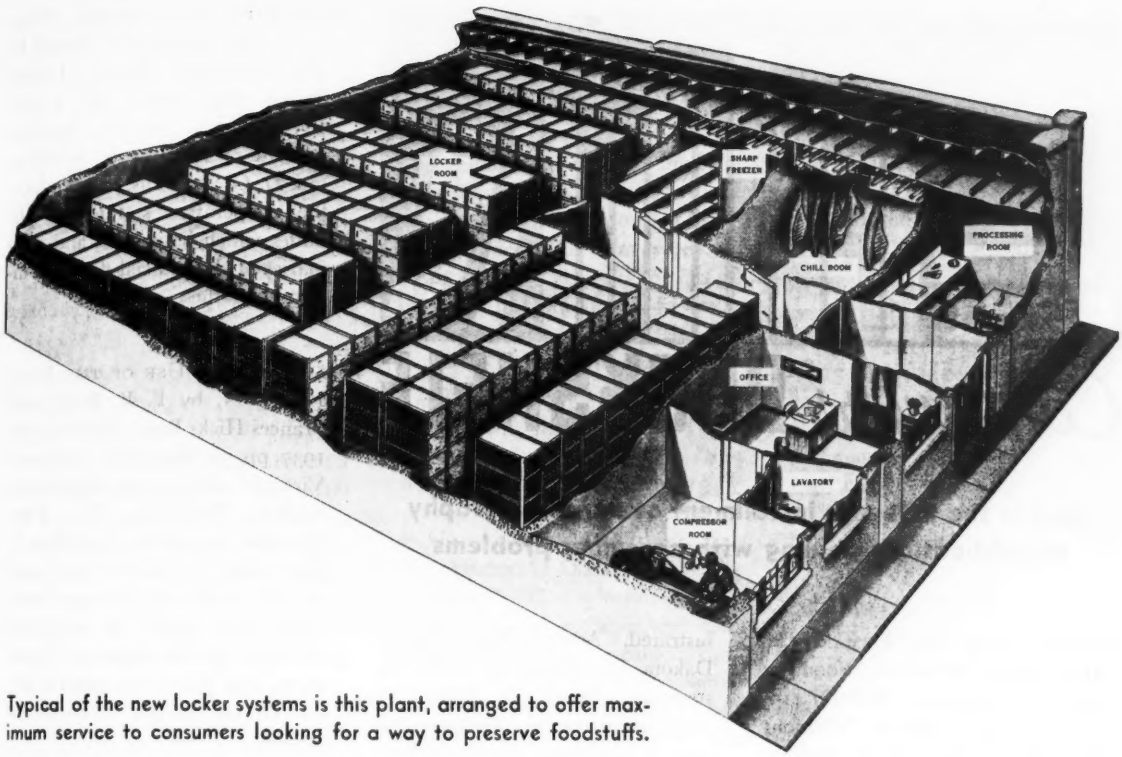
Already unofficial estimates give the number of operating locker plants as around 2,500. About half of these are scattered through the Western and Northwest States, more particularly in the Pacific Northwest. Individual lockers number about 850,000, and rent around $9 a year. Clients probably take nearly 2,000,000 pounds of meat daily from their lockers, saving around $100 per family yearly in food bills.

Home of these miniature packing plants is Centralia, Wash. The idea for them originated in 1917—the result of a favor that an ice-plant owner did for a friend in storing a few pheasants. Not knowing what to do with the game, he tossed it in a can of water, froze it solid. Later the hunter remembered his birds, thawed them out, and found them as juicy as when they were bagged. The success of the experiment started a shower of similar requests. Soon the plant was so cluttered with barrels and boxes that the ice-plant owner built a separate storage room, charging a small sum for space. Later he built a special locker plant equipped with uniform boxes that held about 150 pounds of meat apiece. A side line initiated to cut overhead had turned into a business standing solidly on its own feet.

About 10 years after the first venture, the Walla Walla Dairymen's Association allowed farmers to freeze rabbits and produce in their butter-storage room. Once again the locker business throve—to such an extent in this case that not only did the association build special quarters, but two other plants opened their doors. This town of 16,000 had an individual locker for approximately 1 out of every 16 persons.

Private companies were not the only ones interested in the movement. For a long time cooperative farm associations had agitated for farmer-owned packing plants. These would help farmers and consumers narrow the price margin between them by eliminating the middleman's—that is, the butcher's—retailing expenses, which ordinarily fell to the consumer to pay. Consumers by the new method could buy direct from farmer or wholesaler—a whole side of beef perhaps. This the plant butcher would chop into cuts for the customer to store for future use.

Consistent booster of the movement was the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative State Union of Nebraska which, through its livestock commission company at Omaha, had been selling annually nearly a million head of cattle, hogs, and sheep to a large privately owned packing house. Finally, it decided to run its own packing plant in connection with the creamery branch. The Farmers' Union Creamery at Aurora, Nebr., followed suit by opening an annex last November at the request of farm women. Each locker was to hold about 300 pounds of meat. After 3 months of handling meat brought in by farmers or processed by the hired butcher, the co-op added a small slaughterhouse. Townspeople took an interest in the whole project and



Typical of the new locker systems is this plant, arranged to offer maximum service to consumers looking for a way to preserve foodstuffs.

rented about 20 percent of the locker space, buying meat supplies direct from farmers or from the butcher department of the plant.

Government, also, through the Works Progress Administration, has come to the aid of would-be locker renters. In Madison, Nebr., a municipal ice plant and cold-storage locker system has been completed under the sponsorship of town officials with the cooperation of the WPA. WPA paid half of the costs, mostly for wages, and the sponsors spent an equal amount for building equipment and material. Rents run low—around $4 a year. Reports have it that the plant opened April 1936 with 300 lockers and in 7 months had rented all of these plus an additional 40 that had to be installed to care for the overflow.

About $300,000 worth of cold-storage plants have been erected in various counties of Mississippi by the Mississippi State College authorities with WPA aid. The Mississippi locker systems are built of native stone, concrete, and brick, and have a combined meat-curing capacity of more than four and a half million pounds. It is said that a special feature is air-tight rooms for destroying insect pests. These plants not only permit the farmer to cure his meat at any period of the year and hold his perishable produce for the best market, but furnish permanent employment for a given number of persons, and seasonable employment for a much larger number. The establishment of these plants does away with back-yard methods of butchering hogs, as all hogs will be slaughtered and dressed at the plant under the direct supervision of the State Extension Department of the State College.

Purpose of all these plants is the same—to preserve food over considerable periods of time with as little loss in flavor and quality as possible. Customers rent boxes for one reason—to obtain better food at lower cost. Practically all cold-storage locker plants are built along similar lines: They have a reception office and machinery room, a chill room, processing room, quick-freeze, and locker room. Each is independently and automatically controlled.

Typical itinerary of a piece of beef is this: Meat animals go to the chill room immediately after butchering. There they age in a steady temperature of around 33° F. Next they pass to the processing room where the butcher cuts steaks, chops, and roasts to each client's order. He may grind sausage or render lard. Wrapped in paper and labeled, the cuts then go to the quick-freeze room where a zero or subzero temperature insures the fast freezing

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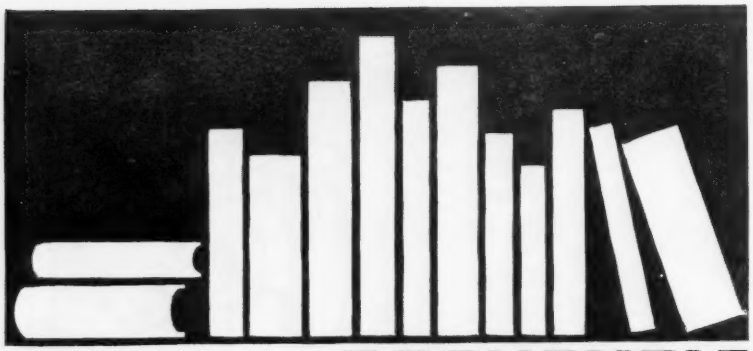


Consumers' BOOKSHELF

Here is the fifteenth installment of our bibliography of publications dealing with consumer problems

A Study of Quality Demands in Household Buying of Food, by Margaret I. Liston. Bulletin 415. 1937, pp. 39. Address: Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station, Burlington, Vt. Free. Says the foreword of this pamphlet, "The results of a study designed to determine what qualities household buyers seek in seven foods commonly purchased, how these characteristics are identified and products possessing them obtained, to what extent established grades and standards are recognized by homemakers, and the nature of their opinions concerning the matter of grading and standardizing certain Vermont-grown foods indicate very strongly the need for consumer education in such matters, as well as for further research in the field of household buying." The foods included in this study are butter, eggs, apples, potatoes, turkeys, beef, and oranges.

Vocational Homemaking Education for Secondary Schools. Bulletin No. 16. 1937, pp. 268, illustrated. Address: State of South Dakota, Department of Public Instruction, Pierre, S. Dak. 75 cents. This course of study contains a section on consumer buying. Pages 187–217 cover units on buying satisfactions, health, clothing and textiles, foods and nutrition, home furnishings and equipment. An advanced unit on home furnishings and equipment is suggested.

Specifications for Purchasing Canned Fruits and Vegetables, by Paul M. Williams. 1937, pp. 21. Address: The Consumers' Project, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. Free. This publication will be of special use to buyers for institutions and cooperatives, or any group ordering in sufficient quantity to buy canned fruits and vegetables by specifications. Lists items which should be considered in making the purchasing contract, and gives names of fruits and vegetables for which U. S. standards are available.

Consumers' Cooperative Statutes and Decisions. Issued by The Consumers' Project, United States Department of Labor. 1937, pp. 219. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 20 cents. Reproduces the cooperative statutes of the States which have laws, and summaries of the judicial decisions interpreting these statutes.

Selection and Use of the Electric Iron, by P. B. Potter and Frances Hicks Bass. Bulletin 307. 1937, pp. 30, illustrated. Address: Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Blacksburg, Va. Free. Contains suggestions to follow in purchasing an electric iron based on the results of numerous tests. Gives two pages of suggested standard specifications for electric irons, and includes a general discussion of proper methods of ironing.

Selection, Operation, and Care of Electric Household Equipment. Extension Bulletin No. 215. 1937, pp. 12, illustrated. Address: Extension Service, Purdue University, La Fayette, Ind. Single copies free, 1 cent each in quantity. Contains brief statements giving general information on the selection and operation of the following kinds of electrical equipment: Washing machines, irons, ironers, vacuum cleaners, ranges, and refrigerators.

Resale Price-Fixing Under the Fair Trade Laws, by the Editorial Staff. "Business Week", August 28, 1937, pp. 38–44. Reprints of this special magazine section may be secured from Business Week, 330 West 42d Street, New York, N. Y. 5 cents. With "fair trade" laws on the statute books

of 42 States and the Tydings-Miller bill now a part of Federal law, increased study will be given price-fixing. This review of the legislation and its operation, "to help manufacturers see how it is built, to know how it functions, to determine just what he stands to gain or lose by its operation", will also be found useful by consumers studying this subject.

CONSUMERS' COOPERATIVE ADVENTURES, by Harlan J. Randall and Clay J. Daggett. 1936, pp. 642, illustrated. Address: Whitewater Press, Whitewater, Wis. $2. After a brief introductory statement on the cooperative movement in England, this book presents factual case studies of individual cooperatives in various sections of the United States. Among the types of organizations discussed are cooperative retail stores, oil companies, wholesales, credit unions, burial associations, rural electrification cooperatives, and educational organizations. Intended primarily as a source book for high school classes.

NOSTRUMS AND QUACKERY AND PSEUDO-MEDICINE, Vol. III, by Arthur J. Cramp, M. D. 1936, pp. 222, illustrated. Address: American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. $1.50. The author of this book is Director of the Bureau of Investigation of the American Medical Association. Reports are given by brand name on a wide variety of so-called "cures", "treatments", "tonics", food fads, and mechanical nostrums based on the findings of the Bureau of Investigation, the Notices of Judgment of the United States Food and Drug Administration, and the Fraud Orders of the Post Office Department.

WASHING, CLEANING, AND POLISHING MATERIALS, by F. W. Smither, United States Bureau of Standards. Circular No. 383. 1930, revised 1935, pp. 47. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 10 cents. Treats of the composition and proper use of different types of soaps, alkaline cleansers, dry cleaning materials, polishes, and sweeping compounds. Some of the discussion is technical in nature.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES IN CONGRESS, by Sarah Ann Jones, National Bureau of Standards. 1936, pp. 19, illustrated. Miscellaneous Publication M122. Address: Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. 5 cents. Some consumer buying classes and club study groups which include a consideration of weights and measures administration in their work will be interested in this pamphlet giving the early history of the weights and measures activities of the Federal Government. It recounts the attempt to secure uniformity of weights and measures from the time of the Continental Congress to 1838.

FACTS ABOUT LINOLEUM, by Charlotte P. Brooks. Brieflet No. 454. December 1936, pp. 3, mimeographed. Address: Extension Service, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt. Free. Describes very briefly the different kinds and grades of true linoleum. Calls attention to types of floor coverings often called linoleum but which have entirely different methods of manufacture.

A STUDY OF OVENS USED FOR DOMESTIC COOKING PURPOSES, by Gail M. Redfield. Bulletin No. 416. 1936, pp. 20, illustrated. Address: Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station, La Fayette, Ind. Free. A technical study of gas and electric ovens for use in the home, reporting their energy losses, thermal efficiencies, heat retention, heat distribution, and accuracy of thermostatic controls. Brand names are not given.

HOW TO BUDGET AND BUY FOR BETTER LIVING, by Rose Biery Andrews. 1937, pp. 31. Address: Home Service, Reader Mail, Inc., 635 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10 cents. Discusses briefly the general purposes of budgeting, ways of improving spending habits, and methods of keeping a budget.

COSMETICS—A RADIO DIALOGUE, by Mrs. Dennis E. Jackson. 1936, pp. 7, mimeographed. Address: Consumer Conference of Greater Cincinnati, School of Household Administration, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. 10 cents. This mimeographed bulletin is one of the radio scripts used for the weekly programs sponsored by the Consumer Conference of Greater Cincinnati and given over Station WCPO. The bulletin tells something of the need for regulation of cosmetics by a new Food and Drug Law.

LUBRICATING OIL, GASOLINE AND KEROSENE INSPECTION, AND TRACTOR FUEL, by Culver S. Ladd, State Food Commissioner and Chemist. Bulletin No. 48. May 1936, pp. 100. Address: State Food Commissioner and Chemist, Bismarck, N. Dak. 30 cents. Gives technical data on tests of gasoline, oil, kerosene, tractor fuel, and dry-cleaning fluids sold in North Dakota. Products are identified by brand name, name of manufacturer, and seller.

Your Food Supplies & Costs

APPLES and grapes occupy the spotlight on the food calendar during September and October. Heaviest shipments are not due until October but September marketings ordinarily are large. Prices lower than a year ago are in prospect for both fruits. The grape crop is over one-quarter larger than in 1936, and the largest since 1928. Apple production is indicated to be about three-quarters larger than last year's small crop, and the largest since 1931.

Retail food costs moved down one-half of one percent during the month ending August 17 as a greater than usual decline in the cost of fresh vegetables and apples offset price advances in butter, eggs, and meats. The total cost of items in the consumer's market basket has dropped slightly during each of the past 3 months because of declines in vegetable prices resulting from relatively large crops. Advancing meat prices have nullified most of these sharp price declines and have tended to prevent costs in general from going below their 1936 level. On August 17, the index of retail food costs as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics stood at 85.5 percent of the 1923–25 average and was only 1.8 percent higher than a year ago.

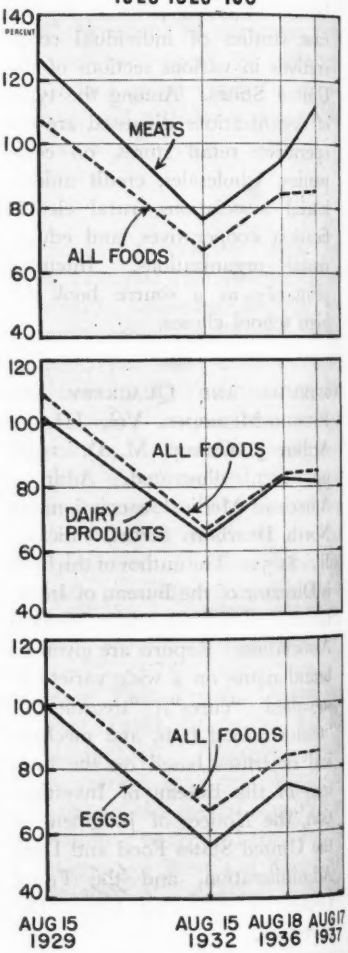
Major price changes during the 4-week period were limited to eggs, meats, dairy products, and fruits and vegetables. Egg prices registered the largest increase, but the 6 percent advance was about the usual change that occurs at this period of the year. Higher prices for poultry, pork, and beef offset slight declines in lamb prices, and meat prices in general jumped 3.5 percent. The cost of dairy products moved up seasonally around 1 percent. Fruit and vegetable costs, however, declined 12 percent, as the prices of most vegetables and all fruits except citrus hit their lowest level for this year. The cost of cereals and bakery products remained unchanged for the second month in succession. Fruit and vegetable costs are 18 percent lower than a year ago while meats are about the same amount above. Changes from 1936 for other food groups are as follows: Eggs 4 percent lower, dairy products down 1 percent, fats and oils up 7 percent, and cereals and bakery products 4 percent higher.

Source of vegetable shipments shifts from local market gardens to the late producing States this month. These States supply from 70 to 80 percent of annual potato and onion requirements, about half of annual cabbage supplies and nearly two-fifths of yearly celery production. The harvesting of these crops ordinarily ends in October. Part of production is placed in storage from which supplies continue to be available until new crops mature early in the following year. Low point in prices usually is reached when the harvest is at its peak. The trend is upward after shipments from storage commence.

Vegetable supplies from the late producing States with the exception of onions are expected to be bigger than in 1936. Last year, drought sharply curtailed production of all late vegetable crops except onions, the production of which was of record size. This year's domestic cabbage crop appears to be 50 percent larger than in 1936, while potato production is expected to be about one-fifth larger. An above-average onion crop is in prospect but supplies may be about one-tenth smaller than in 1936.

Fresh vegetable and apple prices hit their lowest retail level for 1937 on August 17, and all items except

A PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD COST CHANGES
1923-1925=100



citrus fruits were lower in price than last year. The retail prices of potatoes, cabbages, and onions moved down around one-quarter of a cent a pound during the monthly period. Onion retail prices are about the same as a year ago, but cabbage and potato prices are down 50 percent. A 2 cents per pound decline in apple prices resulted from a bumper apple crop.

Butter production is declining seasonally and prices are expected to make their usual rise until they reach their peak in November or December. Prices have been lower than a year ago, but they probably will go above their 1936 level the latter part of the year. From September through May, part of supplies come from cold storage, with heaviest out-of-storage movement in the winter months. Butter storage holdings on September 1 were much higher than a year ago and slightly above average. Butter prices to consumers moved up one-half cent per pound from July 13 to August 17 but were 4 cents a pound lower than a year ago.

Poultry prices most likely will not register their usual decline from July through December, and it appears probable that some price increases may occur. Fresh-dressed poultry hatched during the first half of the year is the major source of supplies in these months. Relatively high feed prices early in 1937 caused a sharp reduction in hatchings. The number of young chickens on farms on July 1, was one-fifth smaller than last year and the smallest on record. The retail price of roasting chickens advanced 2 cents per pound during the 4-week period and was 2.5 cents a pound higher than in 1936.

Egg production has continued at relatively high levels for this time of the year. Large fresh receipts coupled with heavy storage holdings have tended to slow down the seasonal price increase that occurs after production reaches its high point in May. During the month ending August 17, retail egg prices jumped 2 cents a dozen but were the same amount lower than a year ago.

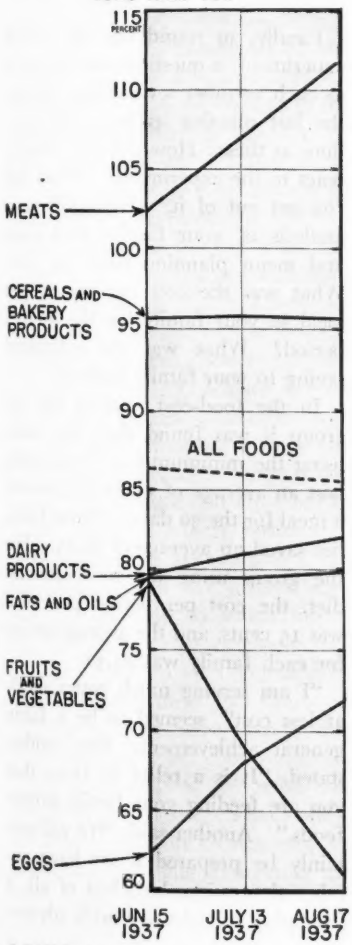
Hog marketings are expected to increase seasonally after September as spring pigs begin to come to market in fairly large numbers. The usual drop in hog prices in prospect for the fall and early winter may come later than usual and may occur mostly after November. Ordinarily the downward price movement ends by mid-December. This year farmers probably will hold their hogs for marketing at heavier weight due to large feed supplies and there may be a considerable increase in marketings in late December and January and a smaller movement earlier.

Beef cattle supply situation remains unchanged from a month ago and no appreciable price changes are expected until 1938. Continued small marketings of grain-fed cattle most likely will keep prices of better grades at or near their present high levels during the remainder of 1937. But a greater than usual decline in prices of these cattle is expected during the first half of 1938, at which time a considerable increase in marketings is in prospect. Prices of lower-grade cattle probably will not register their usual decline during the remainder of the year because of a strong demand by cattle feeders for animals to be fattened on the 1937 corn crop.

Seasonal increases in lamb slaughter are in prospect during the remainder of the grass-fat lamb marketing season which ends December 1. Supplies probably will be larger than average, but not much different from a year ago. From December through May, slaughter consists of grain-fed lambs. A strong demand by feeders for lambs to be fattened on this year's corn crop, and then to be sold during the grain-fed season, is expected to keep live lamb prices at or near their present level.

Retail meat prices with the exception of lamb went up from July 13 to August 17 and were from 2 to 10 cents a pound higher than a year ago. Fresh pork prices jumped 2.5 cents a pound, while ham and bacon respectively were 1.5 and 2 cents a pound higher. In beef, steaks advanced almost 1.5 cents a pound and roasts went up around 1 cent a pound. Lamb cuts declined about one-half a cent a pound. Meat prices are higher than a year ago by the following amounts per pound: Lamb 1.5 cents, bacon 2 cents, fresh pork 8 cents, ham 2.5 cents, beef roasts 7 cents, and steak 10 cents.

A CLOSE-UP OF FOOD COST CHANGES
1923-1925=100



OUT OF THE LOCKER

[Concluded from page 13]

that preserves color and flavor.

Last journey of the packaged product is to the locker room, furnished with tiers of lockers. Temperature here ranges from 10° to 15°, staying on the low side of 15°, since a rise in temperature means certain trouble ahead. Comparatively low temperature is the first essential for successful storage; second essential is cleanliness. That is why lockers are constructed so that air can circulate around and through them; that is why lockers are often metal-built and removable. Probably with the spread of locker plants, it will be necessary for local and State, if not Federal, authorities to step in and put them under pure-food control laws to safeguard customers against public health problems.

Already the question has cropped up as to how to prevent spoilage. In answer to queries from housewives, ice-plant owners took a hand in suggesting approved methods. The United States Department of Agriculture has come forth with a mimeographed leaflet, "Suggestions for Freezing Foods." This treats of fruits and vegetables to be preserved by freezing. It lists desirable varieties, gives information on harvesting, handling, preparation, containers, packing, freezing, and subsequent storage. Although primarily intended for commercial use, the booklet holds hints for housewives too.

First commandment in preparing vegetables for frozen packs is to scald them, as suggested in the leaflet. Different vegetables call for different scalding times; for instance, asparagus should be cooked for 2 to 3 minutes in boiling water, then cooled in running water; scalding husked corn on the cob takes slightly longer, 3 to 4 minutes. Scalding inactivates the ferments that are responsible for deterioration occurring at low temperatures. It sets color, also, and for some products makes packing easier.

Fruits intended for frozen packs are not treated with heat, as a general rule, except where steam-peeled. It is possible, however, to heat light-colored fruits just enough to take away the raw character of the fruit and check the browning tendency before these fruits go into the storage lockers. Though the fresh quality of fruits is lost by this method, some consumers seem to prefer it.

Vegetables are packed with a 2-percent brine solution, or without liquid—that is, in a dry pack. Experiment indicates that these methods have advantages, though certain vegetables can be prepared in other ways. Fruits are covered with a sugar sirup before they go into their containers. With apricots, to take one example, a 40 to 50 percent sugar sirup is a successful packing medium. Dry sugar packs aren't generally satisfactory, because the fruit tissues collapse on thawing when this method is used. And packing unsugared fruit is never recommended.

Speed seems to be the essence in getting the packaged fruits and vegetables into storage and subsequently in serving them at the dinner table. Remember that frozen-pack fruits and vegetables are not sterile and must be used like fresh produce—that is, they must be disposed of within a maximum of 48 hours after thawing, even if kept at a temperature around 30° to 40° F.

Frozen fruits, after thawing, may be eaten raw, cooked, or made up into frozen desserts. If eaten raw, they should be thawed until a small amount of ice is left—just enough to keep the product thoroughly chilled until consumed.

Vegetables must be cooked once they come out of the storage lockers. This is done in one of two ways, depending upon whether they were frozen in brine or without liquid. With the dry pack the vegetable is generally placed in boiling water while still hard-frozen. In the former case, thawing in the original brine produces better quality in most vegetables. Cooking time is usually shorter for frozen-pack vegetables than for the ordinary kind.

CONSUMERS' QUERIES AND COMMENTS

[Continued from page 2]

preparation, and service of food for children were studied. When they turned their attention to "hurry-up" meals, they worked out a well-planned menu which could be served in 30 minutes without advance notice.

Finally, to round out the whole experiment, a questionnaire was sent to each member several days before the last meeting asking such questions as these: How did your family react to the experiment? What did you get out of it? What did your analysis of your family food costs and menu planning mean to you? What was the cost per person per meal in your family for the 30-day period? What was the estimated saving to your family budget?

In the food-cost analysis for the group it was found that, for those using the minimum-cost diets, meals cost an average of 11 cents a person a meal for the 30 days. These families saved an average of $9.25. For the group using the moderate-cost diet, the cost per person per meal was 15 cents, and the average saving for each family was $4.30.

"I am serving much better meals at less cost", seemed to be a fairly general achievement. One mother stated, "It is a relief to *know* that you are feeding your family proper foods." Another said, "We will certainly be prepared if we have another depression, but, best of all, it is helping us right now with advanc-

ing food prices." A young homemaker reported, "I have found that I have not been feeding my family enough of the right kinds of food. I thought that instead of cutting down on food costs I would have to increase them to include all of the foods necessary to insure good health, but to my amazement I have found that I have actually saved money." The secret of saving the family budget learned by one efficient homemaker was, "Plan your meals, don't buy them! Our grandmothers of necessity planned carefully the family food supply—often for months ahead—and used up all left-overs in clever combinations. They didn't run down to the store before every meal but actually *made* their meals. We, too, have learned that lesson." So convinced of the value of planning were several of the group that they promptly sent to the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture for ideas on how to keep records of *all* family expenditures.

Records such as this one bear testimony to the accuracy of conclusions of the Bureau of Home Economics experts who examine family food expenditures galore. Some consumers, they point out, achieve a good diet on little money, while others miss it with more money. There are families, tragically, whose food money is so meager that not even the wisest nutrition expert could contrive for them an adequate diet. At the other end of the income scale are families with so much money that no matter how carelessly they plan they end up with a nourishing diet. Between these two limits are millions of consumers who, if they knew the rules of good nutrition, could make pennies go farther and health grow stronger. That's one of the reasons why the Government has a Bureau of Home Economics and such home demonstration agents as this ingenious one in Wyoming.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THIS ISSUE

1. Give several important features of the food-buying experiment tried by consumers of Washakie County, Wyo.
2. What is a cold-storage locker plant? Could your community use such a plant to advantage?
3. Why are cold-storage locker plants called "pocket-size packing houses?"
4. How has the Government aided locker renters?
5. In what two ways are vegetables packed for storage?
6. What points should you consider in purchasing a shoe?
7. What constitutes good fit in a shoe? And why is good fit essential?
8. List some of the sturdier shoe leathers.
9. What characterizes the best suede?
10. How is patent leather made?
11. What are two of the commonest types of shoe construction? Describe them.
12. How can the X-ray be used to advantage in a shoe store?
13. How can you prolong the life of shoes? How remove oil and grease from leather?
14. What does the trade name "Elk" signify?
15. Why is clear textile-fiber identification particularly necessary at the present time?
16. Describe the procedure in a Federal Trade Commission case involving misbranding and false and misleading advertising.
17. What action are certain stores taking to get accurate information about the fabrics they sell?
18. Give several types of cases receiving the attention of the Federal Trade Commission.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

The CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production

To that end the CONSUMERS' GUIDE emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the CONSUMERS' GUIDE makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.

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